a decorated tower and spire, as shewn in his design, 150 feet high, yet, he wished to cram them with the belief that his design, consisting of nave, clerestory, aisles, transepts, chancel fitted with stalls and tower to the base of the spire, might be executed for the specified sum of 4,000*l.*, until his interview with the committee, when he hesitated to confirm this statement, but was actually allowed to take his competing plans home, in order to cut them down to the necessary sum, and to make the requisite alterations.

Messrs. Elmsley and Co. are permitted to amend, alter, and re-consider their design; so much so, that instead of retaining the tower (I cannot add spire) in the middle of the church, they may remove it to one of the aisles, or any other more suitable position, and instead of preserving the same number of intercolumniations in the nave, they may be reduced, in order to obviate the glaring impracticability of their plan as sent in.

How unjust is such a proceeding! If one competitor be thus allowed to alter, why are not the others placed upon the same footing; and if one design be found to exceed the amount specified, why is it not at once discarded from the competition as impracticable? I think, perhaps, I can answer these queries myself; namely, it is because such a false and unjust system (as in the present instance) has crept into architectural competition, that an architect, being well aware that to behave in an honourable and an honest manner would be absurd and utterly useless, in order to gain any chance of success, resorts to the mode (as in the present case) of introducing towers, spires, and other appendages to his design, which cannot possibly be built for the money, but which, at the same time, have such decided advantages *on paper* over their less pretending yet more honest neighbours', that in the eyes of a committee-man such a design is sure to captivate and mislead: such a system cannot, however, be too much reprehended, and I hope you will lend your assistance to overturn such a dishonourable course of procedure, and in the present instance to render it abortive.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A Surveyor and Looker-on,
but no Competitor.
Winchester, October 29th, 1844.

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENTS.

Sir,—It appears to me an extraordinary proceeding in the carrying out of the metropolitan improvements, that the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, or the surveyors under them, should have planned the vaults for the intended houses through the line from Oxford-street to Holborn without having provided a certain portion of the necessary drain to pass under the vaults from the houses towards the sewer, thereby doing away with the necessity hereafter, as the buildings may progress, of excavating the earth to the depth of 15 to 20 feet at the back of each vault (thus endangering the stability of the brickwork), for the purpose of constructing such drain from the house to the common sewer. I cannot help thinking that it would be useful in the formation of other lines in the intended improvements for some arrangement to be entered into between the above-named authorities and the Commissioners of Sewers, to enter the drains at once from the intended houses, and also those from the gullies in the line of street, and thus avoid the interminable excavations that otherwise will ensue for that purpose. I am induced to trouble you with these remarks in the hope that if they appear to you correct, you may be induced to offer some suggestions to those whom it may more immediately concern. Apologizing for intruding upon your time, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

Vincent Yardley.
5, Thorney-street, Bloomsbury,
October 23rd, 1844.

[We advise the parties concerned to make application to the office of Works and Buildings, and to the Commissioners of Sewers.—Ed.]

PUBLIC BATHS.

Sir,—Public baths are contemplated, and will undoubtedly be established in various parts of the metropolis; but as yet no details have been entered into, and few, if any, suggestions have been made beyond those of *Punch*, who proposes the appropriation of Covent-garden Theatre, while *The Times* prefers the *Fleet Prison*, as the rendezvous of absolutionists. Seriously, Sir, I do sincerely hope for the honour of the nation that every populous parish in London will have its public baths for the rich as well as for the poor; that the buildings will be such as to do credit to the times in which we live, and to the architects employed in their construction.

It does not follow that the poor alone are to have baths. Let us copy the example of the Romans; bring public bathing into fashion, and in a few years it will become an essential necessary of life. A few architectural plans and suggestions would not be amiss at this juncture. Seneca.

October 28, 1844.

DUTY ON BRICKS.

Sir,—Is there no possibility of having the duty taken off bricks? that on tiles and slates has been repealed many years. I have no doubt you, as well as all brickmakers, builders, and other consumers of this valuable material, will concur that the duty ought to cease; why should we not manufacture bricks for building as well as tiles and pipes for agricultural purposes, without being subject to a duty of 6s. 1½d. per thousand? I think a strong effort should be made in order to obtain a total and immediate repeal of the same.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
T—v—k. T. J.

[While we should be glad to see every possible reduction of taxation upon building-materials as upon all other useful commodities, we do not see that this particular tax bears harder than most others. The taxes connected with building, needing most repeal, are those upon glass, which interferes injuriously with its manufacture, and destroys our trade; on window-lights which, cut directly against health and comfort; and on fire-insurance, which discourages prudence, and, in most cases, makes it cost thrice as much as incaution, while the great capitalist who is best able to bear state burthens often chooses wholly to escape it.—Ed.]

GOTHIC ARCHES, QUATREFOILS, &c.

Sir,—You would greatly oblige me by inserting in your notice to correspondents of Saturday the 2nd November, if there is any Gothic work published which shews the centres for all Gothic arches, quartrefoils, trefoiled arches, cinquefoils, &c. If there is, where, and what price may it be obtained for?

I remain, yours very truly,
Gloucester, Oct. 26, 1844. C.B.

[There is none. A portion of the information may be obtained from various works, among which are those of Billings and Brandon.—Ed.]

CAMERA LUCIDA.

Sir,—I have just purchased a camera lucida. Can you or any of your readers give me a hint as to properly using it?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
Brompton, Oct. 27, 1844. F. Page.

Miscellanea.

New Docks at Hull.—The arrangements with the railway company, for removing the soil from the excavation at Dock-green, are completed, and the work of the railway dock will be commenced as soon as the necessary contracts are entered into, tenders for which are advertised to be sent in on or before the 11th inst. The site of the Victoria Dock is also marked out, and excavation for the purpose of procuring clay to make bricks for the new erections is already commenced there. The ground being now defined, affords a good opportunity of judging of the noble dimensions of this spacious dock. Its area will be 17 acres, with 3,390 lineal feet of quays, to be connected by basins with the river Humber on one side, and the Old Harbour on the other. It will abut closely upon the moat of the citadel, from which it will be separated by the present footway, to be protected by a substantial counterscarp wall. The new works are already creating a stir in that neighbourhood, and we observe that an inn near the spot has thus early assumed the sign of "The Victoria Dock Tavern."

Public Baths in Birmingham.—A meeting of highly influential inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood was held in the committee-room of the Town-hall on Tuesday morning last, Mr. W. Beale in the chair, for the purpose of making preliminary arrangements for a town's meeting to consider the best means of providing public walks and baths for the use of the inhabitants. Amongst those present were Messrs. James Taylor, James James, H. Luckock, W. Chance, G. Barker, and William Scholefield; Aldermen Beale, Phillips, and Cutler; Messrs. W. Phipson, Joseph Sturge, Clement Ingleby, James Turner, J. Tyndall, Abel Peyton, C. Geach, T. E. Lee, B. Chesshire, J. H. Beilby, T. R. T. Hodson, John Beale, Bourne, E. Alldridge, J. Plevins, M. Banks, T. Ragg, D. Barnett, C. Lawden, and H. Simons, and many other gentlemen. Alderman Cutler opened the proceedings by calling attention to the importance of the subject, and detailing the acts of the Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the best means of providing places of recreation for the inhabitants of populous towns. On the report of this committee being made, the House granted, at two different periods, the sum of 15,000*l.* to aid the inhabitants of large towns in the formation of public walks and places of recreation. Alderman Cutler also stated the correspondence which had taken place between the corporation and the Government on the subject. Resolutions in furtherance of the objects in view were passed, and a vote of thanks having been carried to the chairman, the meeting separated.—*Birmingham Gazette.*

The Iron Trade in Ayrshire.—We have just learned that Mr. Wilson, of Dundyvan, has taken a lease of the extensive iron-fields on the estate of Sir James Boswell, Bart., of Auchinleck. The iron-stone consists principally of black-band, and is said, by competent judges who have examined it, to be equal to any existing in Scotland. The supply is most abundant; in some places the stratum is reported to be as thick as 20 inches, exclusive of horn-coal and other refuse. We also learn that the Kilbirnie Iron Company have, within the last few years, taken a lease of the iron-stone on the estate of Colonel Smith Neill, of Swindridgemuir, in the parish of Dalry; and that the Messrs. Baird, of Gartsherrie, have contracted for the minerals on the lands of some of the other proprietors in that neighbourhood; so that, with the works at present at Muirkirk, Blair, Kilbirnie, and Cessnock, we may expect ere long to see this county coping with, if not surpassing, all other mineral districts in Scotland. With so many railways in prospect, it must be allowed that the new works are commencing at a most auspicious period.—*Ayr Observer.*

A never yielding Glue.—Dissolve five or six bits of gum-mastick, each the size of a large pea, in as much spirits of wine as will suffice to render it liquid; and in another vessel dissolve as much isinglass—previously a little softened in water (though none of the water must be used)—in French brandy and good rum, as make a two-once phial of very strong glue, adding two bits of gum-galbanum, or ammoniacum, which must be rubbed or ground till they are dissolved. Then mix the whole with a sufficient heat. Keep the glue in a phial closely stopped, and when it is to be used, set the phial in boiling water. This glue will strongly unite bits of glass, and even polished steel. It is used in Turkey by the Armenian jewellers for the purpose of uniting diamonds and other precious stones to silver or gold. The metal is first warmed gently, and has the glue applied, which is so strong that the parts thus cemented never separate.—*Dr. Ure's Cyclopedia.*

Memorial to Throw Open all the Metropolitan Bridges.—Mr. H. Cope, jun., solicitor to the Metropolitan Anti-Bridge Toll Association, presented last Monday to the Lords of the Treasury a memorial from 10,000 merchants, manufacturers, and householders, of the western and central districts of the metropolis, being one of several, containing upwards of 200,000 signatures already presented, for the free passage of Waterloo, Southwark, and Vauxhall bridges, as a paramount measure of metropolitan improvement, by the commutation of the imposts thereon.